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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

For Week Ending
8 September 1948

Vol. III No. 35

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PALESTINE

The Grand Mufti's aspirations in Palestine are again threatening Arab solidarity. It is reported that the Mufti hopes to establish an army under the control of his Arab Higher Committee for Palestine. Such an army would operate independently of the armies of the Arab League states and would therefore seriously hamper their military activities as well as their efforts to achieve a unified command. Moreover, an increase in the influence of the Arab Higher Committee among Palestinian Arabs would disrupt the civil administration of the Arab areas and therefore expose these areas to Jewish penetration. The Mufti would also probably serve as a rallying point for Arab extremists; already the incendiary Moslem Brotherhood in Egypt has indicated that it would support an army composed of Palestinian Arabs and a government built around the Arab Higher Committee. The UK, which is concerned lest the independent actions of the Mufti prejudice the Arab cause in the world at large and further increase instability in the Middle East, is exploring ways of holding him in check.

INDIA-PAKISTAN

After some two months of patient negotiations, the UN Kashmir Commission appears to be back where it started in its attempts to settle the Kashmir dispute. Pakistan has now joined India in nominally accepting the Commission's cease-fire proposals, but Pakistan's belated reply of 6 September contains so many controversial qualifications as to constitute in effect a refusal. Thus, even in the preliminary matter of halting active hostilities, the Commission presumably must undertake a new round of difficult negotiations in which the attempts of India and Pakistan to justify their announced position will probably evoke a flurry of recriminations. The independence being shown by the partisans of the two dominions in Kashmir provides another troublesome aspect of the situation. Sheikh Abdulla, Prime Minister of the Indian-supported Kashmir Government, has shown no interest in obtaining independence for his state. Meanwhile, the head of the "Azad Kashmir Government," set up by pro-Pakistan Moslem tribesmen, has insisted that he be consulted by the Commission in any attempt to settle the Kashmir issue.

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ITALIAN COLONIES

The effectiveness of any disposition of the Italian colonies will ultimately depend on the attitude of the native populations concerned as well as on that of the major powers. The prospect of British trusteeship over Cyrenaica does not betoken difficulties, since Sayid Idris, the powerful Senussi leader of the Arab majority there, would operate closely with the British even if he were given independent status. However, the return of Italian Somaliland to its former masters, as currently envisaged by all four members of the Council of Foreign Ministers, could be expected to provoke serious rioting on the part of the Somali Youth League, the dominant organization of the large Moslem majority there. The projected cession to Ethiopia of portions of southern Eritrea (with a decision on the remainder postponed) may also lead to outbreaks on the part of anti-Ethiopian Moslems. The fear that Tripolitania might be returned to Italy has already agitated Tripolitania's politically conscious Arab majority. In an attempt to forestall such a step, the Tripolitanian political parties might attempt to ally their country with Cyrenaica's Sayid Idris regime in a united Libya or to set up an independent government of their own.

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